

Scaleable IT solution maximises Central Gippsland TAFE's return on investment

CENTRAL GIPPSLAND TAFE

NEC Business Solutions helped Central Gippsland TAFE (GippsTAFE) find and implement solutions to IT issues, and tailored a new IT solution to satisfy their time-critical requirements.

Together they have established a relationship that has become a true 'technical partnership', with GippsTAFE acclaiming NEC's ability to add value to the relationship and provide flexible support and back-up.

GippsTAFE is a diverse educational organisation with four campuses in the Gippsland area of eastern Victoria. It has a strong focus on training regional, national and international students for work in the energy, mining, telecommunications and transport industries.

GippsTAFE is a customer-focused organisation, emphasising relationships with the enterprises and individuals with which it deals. It meets customers' needs through quality-driven, responsive vocational education, training and services.

In November 2001, GippsTAFE put out a tender for the supply of 11 servers to run Novell operating systems. Rosemary Burns, GippsTAFE's IT Manager, said that the institute required a robust, scaleable, fault tolerant IT solution to provide a stable platform for its network and the implementation of a new mail system. "We needed high quality rack-mountable servers within a competitive price range. The successful tenderer also needed to work with GippsTAFE's IT team and other outside consultants, as well as build and test the system off-site," she said.

GippsTAFE considered that NEC's proposal creatively addressed the institutions IT needs, as well as being competitive. This included meeting an aggressive rollout plan of less than six working weeks, from commencement to completion.

From the outset, NEC's challenge was to build GippsTAFE's awareness of the experience and full capabilities of NEC Business Solutions. NEC addressed this issue in three ways.

First, NEC Business Solutions actively helped GippsTAFE resolve some longstanding residual technology issues it had. This showed GippsTAFE that NEC's support was there for the long haul.

Second, NEC designed an IT solution that addressed GippsTAFE's requirements and needs. NEC demonstrated to GippsTAFE, the levels of service that NEC could -and would- provide.

case study

Third, NEC provided significant technological support to GippsTAFE by training staff in the service and maintenance of the NEC servers the institution was installing. This involved NEC training GippsTAFE technical support personnel at NEC's Research and Development centre to the level where they could establish and sustain accreditation as an Authorised NEC Service Centre. This accreditation enables them to perform basic maintenance themselves, supported by NEC.

NEC and GippsTAFE, working together, ensured a smooth implementation of the systems that was co-designed by NEC and Novell. A preliminary network was thoroughly tested by NEC at its Research and Development centre to ensure that a viable and working system would be implemented.

To assist in supporting this regional installation NEC has installed a remote monitoring system which connects GippsTAFE to NEC's National Operations Centre. This leading edge service allows GippsTAFE's servers and site systems to be monitored directly by NEC. Server hardware and operating system status can be monitored and abnormal conditions reported before they affect users. System problems, including fire alarms or air conditioning failures, can be detected proactively and many faults rectified remotely, often before the customer is aware of them.

Since fulfilling GippsTAFE's original requirements, the institute has ordered a further \$400,000 worth of servers. GippsTAFE is now considering installing NEC's Telephony over Internet Protocol (ToIP) telephony solution throughout its Gippsland campuses.

According to Doug Elliott, NEC Account Manager for GippsTAFE, the key to NEC's success with GippsTAFE was the establishment of this technical partnership. 'We were able to establish this relationship because we first sought to help GippsTAFE by addressing its ongoing IT issues. Moving forwards, we have consistently tried to add value to this GippsTAFE's business. This has strengthened our relationship.'

Central Gippsland TAFE is benefiting in a number of ways from its ongoing relationship with NEC Business Solutions. The institution is involved with an IT provider willing to tailor solutions to GippsTAFE's needs, rather than impose technology upon it. NEC's competitive prices enable GippsTAFE to maximise its return on investment and continue to successfully be a customer-focused organisation. NEC is providing high levels of service and back-up that enable GippsTAFE to focus on its core business of providing quality, responsive vocational education, training and services.

According to Rosemary Burns, 'GippsTAFE staff and users alike have acknowledged that the final result has been highly successful.'

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